

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-4 (Canceled).

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A lining for columns of automobiles, comprising:  
a base area, ~~with fixing and holding elements and~~  
[[at least one]]an opening area for covering an airbag, ~~wherein the at least one~~  
~~opening area comprises a thermoplastic material with a Shore A hardness greater than 100~~  
~~and has and~~  
a hinge area [[contacting]] disposed between and adjoining the base area and  
opening area, and consisting essentially of a thermoplastic material with a Shore A hardness  
of less than 95.

wherein the hinge area is coplanar along a surface of the base area and the opening  
area, and

wherein the hinge area is made of a material having a different hardness than the base  
area and the opening area.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The lining as claimed in claim 5, wherein the opening area is further bounded by intended fracture lines or wall thickness reductions adjoining the hinge area.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The lining as claimed in claim 5, wherein the hinge area consists essentially of a thermoplastic material with a Shore A hardness between 30 and 95.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The lining as claimed in claim 7, wherein the hinge area consists essentially of a thermoplastic material with a Shore A hardness between 60 and 80.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The lining as claimed in claim 5, wherein the base area and the opening area together with the hinge area are covered by a unified decorative layer.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended) A lining for columns of automobiles, comprising:  
a base area, and

[[at least one]]an opening area for covering an airbag, wherein the [[at least one]] opening area is ~~formed of a unitary layer~~ coplanar along a surface of the base area and comprises a first material having a first hardness, except for a hinge area comprising a second material having a second hardness being different than said first hardness.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The lining as claimed in claim 10, wherein the base area has at least one fixing element.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The lining as claimed in claim 10, wherein the second material is thermoplastic.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The lining as claimed in claim 10, wherein the opening area is further bounded by intended fracture lines or wall thickness reductions adjoining the hinge area.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The lining as claimed in claim 10, wherein the second hardness is less than the first hardness.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The lining as claimed in claim 14, wherein the second material further has a Shore A hardness between 30 and 95.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The lining as claimed in claim 14, wherein the second material further has a Shore A hardness between 60 and 80.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The lining as claimed in claim 10, wherein the base area and the opening area together with the hinge area are covered by a unified decorative layer.

Claim 18 (New) A trim panel having an inner surface and an outer surface, comprising:  
a base portion,  
an opening portion, and  
a hinge portion disposed between and adjoining the base portion and the opening portion,  
wherein at least one of the inner surface and the outer surface is coplanar, and  
wherein the hinge portion is made of a material having a different hardness than the base portion and the opening portion.

Claim 19 (New): The trim panel as claimed in claim 18 wherein the base portion and the opening portion is made of the same material.

Claim 20 (New): The trim panel as claimed in claim 18, wherein the opening portion is made of a thermoplastic material having a Shore A hardness greater than 100.

Claim 21 (New): The trim panel as claimed in claim 18, wherein the hinge portion is made of a thermoplastic material having a Shore A hardness less than 90.

Claim 22 (New): The trim panel as claimed in claim 18, wherein the hinge portion is made of a thermoplastic material having a Shore A hardness between 30 and 95.

Claim 23 (New): The trim panel as claimed in claim 18, wherein the base portion is made of a thermoplastic material having a Shore A hardness greater than 100.

Claim 24 (New): The trim panel as claimed in claim 18, wherein the base portion, the opening portion and the hinge portion are covered by a decorative layer.

Claim 25 (New): The trim panel as claimed in claim 18, wherein the hinge portion is adhered to the base portion and the opening portion.

Claim 26 (New): The lining as claimed in claim 5, wherein the hinge area is adhered to the base area and the opening are.

Claim 27 (New): The lining as claimed in claim 10, wherein the hinge area is adhered to the base area and the opening area.